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Editorial

ONE of the *Tracts for the Times* was entitled "On Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge". It was one of the longest tracts;[1] its author was Isaac Williams. Its tone and idiom, as well as its title, are remote from what we are accustomed to in current literature that deals with "evangelism". It calls attention to some truths about the ways of God that are calculated to surprise, if not to impress, all Christians who take it for granted that it is their plain and simple duty to bear public witness to their faith. Isaac Williams was concerned to protest against the intense and aggressive methods of spreading the Gospel that were followed by the Evangelicals of his day, and to show that they were contrary to the rule of the Scriptures and to "the practice and principle of the Antient Church". One trembles to think what the writers of the Tracts would have felt about our twentieth-century "evangelistic campaigns" or of the use that we try to make of modern means of publicity. The role of a popular preacher is notoriously a dangerous one for himself, and less notoriously for those who listen to him, and equal perils attend all who succeed in turning evangelism into "a powerful worldly engine". It woud be well if as much thought were given to the principles of Christian publicity as to improving techniques.

The Tract "On Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge" would be found to raise some awkward questions.

"The Holy Spirit, in every way in which his dealings with mankind can be ascertained, is ever wont to throw a veil over his presence from the eyes of the world. . . . As our Lord avoided the more public places for the manifestations of his Divine power and goodness, and went into the retired and despised Galilee, and hid his Divinity under the garb of humble and common life, so does he in the persons of his disciples, producing in them a tendency to withdraw themselves from the eyes of men; so that of each of them it may be said, as it was of him, 'He doth not strive nor cry, neither is his voice heard in the streets.' "[2]

Isaac Williams's style of writing was unfortunately somewhat tedious, but from time to time he sums up his argument in pithy and provocative expressions. "Christian truth is in itself essentially unpopular."[3] "Those who most value sacred things will in general say least about them."[4] And he quotes the maxim of Thucydides: "Men venerate that which resisteth them, and that which courteth their favour they despise."[5]

It is, in fact, a fair question whether eloquent public appeals and

[1] To be precise, *two* Tracts, namely 80 and 87.
[2] Tract 80, p. 58.
[3] Tract 87, p. 52.
[4] Tract 87, p. 100
[5] Tract 80, p. 69.

powerful public assaults on behalf of the Gospel do not do more harm than good. Perhaps the witness that bears most fruit is that of the secret which has to be extracted (or "taken by violence") in private from men of reserve, and the Holy Spirit has most free course where two or three meet together in fear and trembling.

Reflections on Death

It is customary to regard death as a boundary between the "here" and the "beyond". If this notion is true two lines of inquiry are open to us. We may deal with death in its relation to the "beyond", whatever this may mean; or we may treat of death in its relation to the "here", looking for the consequences it may have for our understanding of life, of man, and of the world. Since we have no acquaintance with the "beyond", and are therefore in no position to give information about it, we must of necessity pursue the other line.

Every attempt to perceive meaning in life raises the question of death, because, if for no other reason, death is the inexorable attendant on life; because every instant that passes away consumes a little more of life and makes death not a special misfortune but a condition of man's very existence. The knowledge of death is a matter of certainty: it is perhaps the only certainty life holds.

The question of the meaning of life is evaded, not answered, by saying that to live is to grow, to work, to procreate children, to get a pension, to calcify, and to sink into the grave. That may be, and is, the plain stuff of life, about which, however, no special information is required by him who asks: "What is life?" He knows these things, and it is just these things which make him ask the question. A man with good muscles, who deals in brief, stern truths, sure of himself, innocuous and immune, may undoubtedly claim to have discovered meaning in his life's work, in the changes produced by him in his environment, or in posterity. In acknowledging some assured value or values transcending our individual selves as the purpose of life, death seems to lose its character of finality and may no longer be regarded as annulling or invalidating the endeavours and achievements of man. These conform, as it were, to the law of the preservation of energy, and death proves not an end but a point of transition.

But, because he is human, the questioner does not stop there: he goes on asking for further and more comprehensive meanings. Does the goal of life consist in the happy vision of future smiling generations, or in a perfected social order, or in a blissful standard of living, or in fame? But then, why all these things? Whoever has drunk from the source of such ideals must go from source to source in a never-ending, restless striving. For the dark, the irrational, the brutal reality of death forces its way into all life and proves a threat to ideals no less than to human individuals. Nothing seems protected against its oppressive and insinuating presence; no truth or value remains unambiguous in the face of it. And so the search goes on and on for ever.

One may, admittedly, repudiate such unending and apparently

unprofitable progression and decide to stop at some particular form or aspect of life, and then proceed to raise it to an absolute value. Or one may attempt to make life worth while by admiring the very endlessness of the search for values which arise, become, and cease to be. But in both cases death is whittled down and deprived of its reality, of its deadly sting, of its alien and tragic character. Man does not die entirely such a death as this. It is transformed into a mere figure of the transitoriness of life. The species survives the individual, and mankind survives and feasts on man. Death turns into a point of transition from the personal to the supra-personal or impersonal, or rather, into a dissolution of the one in the other, into a mere metamorphosis of life.

How deep-rooted this notion is can be seen in such current expressions as: "we must all die", or "everyone is born to die", or "death comes sooner or later". Speaking thus, man really wants to say that he has nothing to do with all these counsels of wisdom, since the "we", the "all", the "everyone" are in fact no ones and nobodies to him. The hiding from death holds such obstinate sway over the mind and heart of man that, even while he dies, he manages to display an extraordinary heroism in persuading himself and others that death will never touch him, that he is about to enjoy a heavenly prosperity with an easier conscience, or else safely to return to, and continue to consolidate and expand, his kingdom of the commonplace.

But the heroism is no more than heroic self-deception, a habit of refusal to face realities, and, however much he may try to conform to the depersonalization of death, man cannot explain away that old anxiety—the persistent fear of death, pointing, as it apparently does, to some hiatus in the soul, to a craving blank, to a lack of one of the essential threads which secure the safety of his position in this life. Even the wholesome and the sane derive little comfort from innocent optimism when confronted with the reality of death, and in that confrontation are apt to defy all the highfalutin philosophical and religious consolations which make the grave invisible under a heap of flowers. The story is told of a philosopher who sought to console a woman in distress with the account of tribulations akin to hers, and who, on losing his only son, was sent by her a list of kings similarly bereaved. He read it, acknowledged its correctness, but wept none the less.

Death will for ever remain the enemy, the wholly other thing. The fear of death may betray itself in an overt and conspicuous fashion, in the frenzy of clinging to the instants of greedy living; or it may be well disciplined and repressed; or, again, concealed behind the screen of ideological immortality—but it is fear no less for that.

Why this fear if death is but a standing proof of the constant change of natural phenomena, of the natural flux and transcience of life, with its repertory of forms whose instances come into existence and pass out of it again? Why this fear if man is but a specimen of his genus, which perishes while the genus survives? Rendered in-

nocuous death is still triumphant—the thief, the taker away of something most precious and most valued. And human life, as thus revealed in death, proves to be, after all, more and other than a series of transitory incidents appearing and disappearing on the stage of the world.

It is impossible, therefore, to speak of death, on some biological analogy, as of a "natural" element of life, which is supposed to triumph over all its concrete, individual manifestations. Biologists may take it for granted that death pertains to the natural order, i.e., that it is "natural" and "in order". But, absurd and paradoxical though this may be, Christians and Jews alike insist that death is *not* in order, that it is, on the contrary, evidence of some dis-order at the very heart of human existence, that it is "the wages of sin". The view that Adam by his disobedience "in Paradise" incurred the wrath of God and consequently the physical death with which God had threatened him, and by this sin of his transmitted to the entire human race bodily pain and death is, admittedly, a caricature of the Christian teaching. Death as the Christian sees it is not simply the physical effect of a spiritual cause, namely, "sin", "fall", or whatever term is used to denote the origin of man's afflicted condition. It is safe to assume that Adam and Eve did not confine themselves in their paradisial bliss to the eating of forbidden and unforbidden apples. They may have eaten some animals, and since animals cannot be eaten alive, they would have had to slaughter them. The bliss of paradise may not have been so blissful and deathless after all, at least not for the unfortunate victims of the eating habits of man. . . . But death, as the Christian sees it, presents a pre-eminently human problem—the appalling and unallayed tragedy of human life, which, indeed, takes affect in the medium of the biological extinction of individual organisms, but is yet to be distinguished from it. The death of a human being is a qualitatively different event from the mere biological cessation of life in the animal kingdom. And it is important to ponder over the truism that a biological death corresponds to a biological life, while a human death corresponds to a human life. Man may come to see more in his physical end than a mere biological occurrence.

In conceiving death as an unimportant if unlucky episode of life, and of man as a specimen of his kind to be replaced by other specimens, we deny or ignore that deep mystery of death which is experienced in the horror of it: the mystery, namely, that *I* must die, endowed as I am with a unique and irreducible personal character. There is some strange relation between personality and death dimly struggling and evolving itself from the dreadful antagonism between them. Death, the great "button-maker", as Ibsen called it, which melts down all things and equalizes all; death, which is the most commonplace occurrence in life, proves to be, in fact, the greatest personal tragedy of man.

Man must die, if he is to die at all, in that region which is marked by his unique and unrepeatable personal character. We cannot be seriously concerned with the problem of death unless we do justice

to the personal character of man, even if this involves us in admitting the possibility of his ultimate annihilation. Is not the persistence of fear in the face of death, defying all consolations and all alleviations, evidence of the fact that man is somehow aware of such a possibility, that he knows of his extreme vulnerability and perhaps of his ultimate destruction, which no survival of his kind, of his life's work, or of his name, can ever redeem? Man is, indeed, much more easily destroyed than inanimate things or objects, lacking as he does their stability, their resistance and invulnerability. And yet it is the honour and privilege of man that he can die. Dead things, like chairs and tables, cannot die; and the higher and more complex a being is, the more it is exposed to death and the less it is immortal.

To experience death as the "last enemy" is to experience the awful implications of the fact that "I am", "I am myself", not somebody or something else; it is to know man alone in death, enveloped in a monstrous silence, free and thrust upon himself, without assistance and without excuse, condemned to be a person at least once, and in that loneliness confronted by God. Only thus does death become what it is: a real dead-end, a *disaster*, from which, however, most people attempt to hide by way of all kinds of scientific, metaphysical, and religious smoke-screens. This applies to the Platonic or Orphic doctrine of immortality, according to which death is the release or reawakening of the human soul through the dropping off of the material body, no less than to that peculiar religious notion where death is made out to be a means of reward for virtue and immortality a repository for affairs that had not been satisfactorily consummated on earth.

The challenge of the Christian understanding of man aims at these and suchlike notions which proceed from a division of man into two compartments, a soul and a body, and provide him with a refuge from the fearful and catastrophic experience of death. Some religious devotees were of course quick to seize the fear of death and, in hedging it round with the menace of hell-fire and eternal damnation, have given divine sanction to the idea of punishing people to make them better and to make the punisher feel better. But this is just another instance of the merciless depersonalization of death, by virtue of which some Christians believed it possible to see man writhe in torment with a quiet conscience, so long as the principle of salvation was maintained. The authentic Christian attitude to death, however, is characterized by the knowledge that man is utterly indivisible, and that he is therefore wholly and utterly to die. No immortal powers, of which he himself would be a mere function, or instrument, or a fleeting, transitory manifestation, can be substituted for concrete, individual man. Idealism, in all its forms and ramifications, affirms the immortality of the supra-personal or the impersonal, that is to say, of the supra-human or the human, of idea and principle, of world-spirit and world-reason, and thereby displays its characteristic indifference both to death and to human personality. "It is only for the person and from the personal point of view", wrote Berdyaev, "that death is tragic and significant". No conceivable

tragedy can be attached to the death of abstract concepts or to the impersonal, transitory phenomena of nature. The only agonizing and unendurable thing about death is that it should threaten to destroy the unique and unrepeatable image of man.

It is man who stands behind all the values which metaphysicians relegate to an ideal heaven for disembodied ghosts, and positivists to an evolutionary paradise for the immortal human species; and it is man who must die lest he cease to be human and lose his identity in the abstractions and generalities of a scientific, metaphysical or religious universe. From this point of view death can no longer be regarded as a matter of "passing away" or "passing over": rather, it is one of "going down", seeing that human personality is irreducible and cannot pass away or pass over into anything but itself. If there is redemption from death, this cannot consist in the attainment of an alleged immortality, which, in fact, by-passes death, but must needs be a *resurrection* of the dead, i.e., a restitution in the very midst of man's mortal predicament through him who could not be choked by the irresistible impact of its black and deadly force. Resurrection is the Tomb burst open, not vacant, while immortality is the Tomb repudiated and denied.

The key to the understanding of death, then, is the recognition of that inalienable identity of man which marks him as a person. The disease, which has been eating the heart out of so much modern thinking and living, of depersonalizing everything, on the one hand, and of wishing unpleasant things away, on the other, has proved fatal in the matter of death. Death is so easily and hurriedly explained away because we are constantly swayed and lured and blinded by impersonal forces. Most people would readily agree to be a piece of stone, if only they could escape the burden of personal existence. The flight into impersonalism, so familiar to our age, is the flight from death. We flee, as if hurried on by a great wind—haggard, grim, beastly, mean, cruel, anxious, and pathetic—into the safety of commonplace existence until death hits us in the face; and, despite all the promises of a safe return, despite all the unctuous weeping, with one predatory eye on anything we may have left behind and the other on some sort of immortal compensation, we hear, even if faintly, the terrible intimation that we, that *I*, must die, that it is my whole and very self which death calls into question. And, knowing at last that we cannot play the angel, we realize that we must go down before we can go up.

E. Lampert.

The Assumption: A Postscript

Twelve months have now passed since Pope Pius XII formally defined the Assumption of the Virgin as an article of the Roman Catholic faith. If this memorandum contains a personal note that is because, although the dogma caused widespread reactions among Christians—of joy among latinized Roman Catholics, of disappointment or indignation among the non-Roman communions, of be-

wilderment or disdain among unattached observers—the present writer is one of a very few who, by the dogma, has been divided from his former spiritual allegiance. The possibility of such an outcome first presented itself to me in 1946, when it became known that the Pope had consulted the Roman Catholic bishops throughout the world as to the expediency of a definition. I knew of Roman Catholics, including some well-known ones, who dreaded the definition almost as much as I did, but of these there was only one, Mr Raymond Winch, who I knew was prepared to make a stand against it. In the ensuing twelve months we repeatedly talked over the situation and explored the courses open to us. The case was difficult. The definition now seemed almost certain to take place, and even the date of it was being confidently predicted. On the other hand, we were not recognized as theologians, and although we were agreed that theology was closely connected with the problem of living, we had also to agree that in practice, and in that of the Roman Catholic Church in particular, theology is something of a closed shop. We would of course have been well content to have left our cause in the hands of qualified champions, but in Germany Dr Ernst was dead and in France Martin Jugie had withdrawn his caveat. What opposition there was had already been virtually withdrawn or overruled. We felt, however, that there was a principle in making a gesture of protest, even if the gesture were a faint one and one that would inevitably be brushed aside. For a precedent, though not for a comparison, we looked back to the action of "Janus" at the time of the Vatican Council.

By courtesy of the Editor of THEOLOGY, there appeared an article that was intended to raise the alarm in England and beyond England.[1] Five hundred reprints of this article subsequently reached Roman Catholic bishops and other responsible persons in the farthest parts of the world. I have since felt that the negligible effect of this enterprise might have developed into something positive if Anglican dignitaries had taken advantage of the introduction of the subject to state publicly their attitude to the impending definition. The article, however, produced no audible echo.[2] After August 1950 spokesmen of the Church of England expressed their reactions to the definition firmly and moderately, but it was then too late. Had such pronouncements been made earlier they might well have registered an effect at Rome and at least caused embarrassment to those who were advising the Pope. There is reason to believe that the official silence at the Vatican that preceded the announcement in August 1950 covered no little doubt about whether the dogma was opportune. A little pressure might have turned the scale.

Mr Winch and I next decided to collaborate in writing a book that would review all the relevant aspects of the Assumption question and oppose the definition on strictly Catholic grounds. The S.P.C.K. were kind enough to encourage this project even before we had a

[1] "The Assumption of the Virgin and Papal Infallibility," THEOLOGY, September 1948.

[2] An exception may be made for *Oekumenische Einheit*, Vol. I, No. 1.

manuscript to present, and it was our fault, not theirs, that the book[1] was not published until 14 August 1950, only one day before Rome announced that the dogma would be proclaimed on the Feast of All Saints to follow. The coincidence of dates gave an air of timeliness to our venture, but in the eyes of Roman Catholics it placed a guiltiness upon the book from the outset and confirmed our opinion that it would do nothing to avert the definiton. Although one Roman Catholic monthly referred to us as "talented amateurs" and another to the book as "a slick piece of special pleading", our argument, where it was noticed at all by Roman Catholic reviewers, was rejected with civility, and from that time no third person in the Roman Catholic communion made himself known to us as a sympathizer with our views. We had to content ourselves with the approbation of numerous dignitaries and members of a Church that we loved, but to which we did not belong.

In meeting the objections of Roman Catholics, I found a preliminary obstacle. They are trained to attach great importance to the virtue of obedience, and it seemed to them that to question the validity of even a probable dogmatic pronouncement was to have departed from the obedience due from a true Roman Catholic. The intellectual encounter was thus forestalled by a moral accusation. I used, however, to answer in this way. Simple obedience is a becoming virtue in a majority of those who make up the body of the Church and whose interests and limitations prevent them from studying the theology of Christianity in detail, but obviously this attitude of mind would not become every member of the Church. There must be some who propound, regulate and oversee the doctrines which others accept by obedience. There is such a thing as "the mind of the Church", and, in fact, theologians frequently refer to it. Advances in education have done something to reduce the lead of the clergy over the laity and have made it possible for a larger number than ever before to attach themselves to the mind as well as to the body of the Church. What right I possessed to review for myself the progress of theology was based upon the not very ambitious claim that I constituted a brain-cell in the mind of the Church rather than a cell located in one of her less conscious parts. I was willing to interact with the other brain-cells in all their thousands, but not to be ruled out of order because I had considered a momentous theological issue for myself. This plea usually enabled me to proceed to the more relevant aspects of the dogma.

As our objections to the dogma were based on Catholic grounds and involved the consistency of the Church with her own past, it was a more serious objection that in rejecting the coming definition we had, by implication, rejected the infallibility of the Pope and were therefore not true Roman Catholics when we wrote the book. As to this some Gilbertian points could be made, such as that doubts of the dogma were legitimate from the time of its announcement up to its actual definition, and that even the Pope could not be certain of the doctrine of the Assumption until he heard his own voice pro-

[1] *The Assumption of Our Lady and Catholic Theology.*

claiming it in all the appropriate circumstances; but trifling aside, it had always seemed to me that Papal Infallibility was a belief that could not be held without reservation. A Roman Catholic believes that the Pope cannot and therefore will not officially err. This, however, is an abstract principle which could conceivably be contradicted by an occurring fact. If the Pope taught something patently false or inconsistent with the faith, belief in Papal Infallibility would have to be surrendered. The Roman Catholic naturally believes that a rash Pope would be held back from teaching error by invisible restraints, but he cannot say that a false definition is inconceivable, and therefore belief in Papal Infallibility is conditioned by this logical possibility. One clearly false dogma would constitute a datum invalidating the theoretical belief in infallibility, and data must have priority over theory.

This is to show that belief in infallibility must be conditional. It is in the highest degree unlikely that a Pope will in fact ever teach officially that which may be simply disproved, and the dogma of the Assumption did not constitute such an instance. This doctrine was defective on historical, theological, and dogmatic grounds, but there remains a margin for believing, if one wills, that it is a theological truth. The Papal claim has not been destroyed by it, but this claim has nevertheless been shaken. The implausibility of the dogma reflects on the infallibility of the Roman see. We have here to conjure not with proved facts but with probabilities. The dogma of the Assumption has made it more probable that the dogma of Papal Infallibility was a mistake.

Catholic publicists, usually so able in apologetics, have recently been much concerned to make the two doctrines hang together, and to lift the dogma of the Assumption out of the arena of controversy altogether. Henry St John, O.P., for example, wishes to show that historical evidence is not relevant when a doctrine such as the Assumption is being considered as an article of faith.[1] This point needs clarification. There are two sorts of historical evidence to be distinguished here, namely, evidence that Mary was in fact assumed and evidence that the Church in various ages accepted her Assumption as a doctrine. Of historical evidence that the Assumption took place there is none worthy of the name. That need not matter. What is more serious and what is surely relevant to its consideration as a dogma is that the other kind of historical evidence indicates that *belief* in the Assumption was not constant in the Church for half the course of her history and for a quarter of that course apparently non-existent. There are those today who believe that the Virgin Birth is not adequately proved as an historical event, but these would not venture to dispute that the Virgin Birth has been an article of faith in the Church since the first century. While, however, a modernist outlook may countenance the omission of even a venerable Christian belief, the avowed repose of the Roman Catholic Church on tradition makes it logically impossible to ignore her past views when the definability of a doctrine is in question. What the Church believed

[1] Letter in THEOLOGY, May 1951.

yesterday is relevant to what she decides today, or at least that was the case until recently. The present anxiety to overrule all historical evidence in a dogmatic question shows that a displacement has taken place in the Roman Catholic system. Tradition, as enunciated at Trent and emphasized at the Vatican, is no longer a factor of paramount importance. Instead the hinge of all doctrine is found in the papal office with its attendant prerogative in matters of faith. This office has been accorded power to override tradition, which is but another name for the historical evidence of what the Church taught and believed in other ages.

Let it be said that the living Church must have power to clarify the gospel and develop its content within logical limits. It is nevertheless true that the nature of such doctrines as the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception, which Roman Catholic theologians are now obliged to treat as dogmas, renders untenable any theory of doctrinal development within the strict bounds of reason. This is not intended as a provocative comment, but as a statement which in other words they are themselves putting forth.

Canon G. D. Smith, for example, writes of the modern theory of development in Mariology in this way. "It is not a purely logical process by which one abstract truth is deduced from another. It is a gradual penetration into the whole of revealed truth by means of theological reflection . . . with the result that the theological portrait of Mary comes into clearer and clearer relief. There is nothing quite like it in any department of human knowledge."[1] He adds that it is not determined by historical records or by human reasoning or by the study of doctors or by the meditations of the saints. If one asks what does determine it, the answer clearly is: the word of a Pope speaking *ex cathedra*. No one else is empowered to say whether a gradual penetration into the whole of revealed truth by means of theological reflection (in itself a phrase of uncertain meaning) has taken place, nor can the doctors or the saints of the Church be used to confirm or deny the papal utterance.

There are three notable consequences to this theory.

1. A "gradual penetration" which is not a "purely logical process" permits, at least as a possibility, the capture of truths previously unknown and unknowable, or in other words new revelations. Roman Catholic theologians are not yet willing to admit that this is the case. They still feel a respect for the idea of a closed deposit of doctrine, but once the idea of a mystical development is substituted for the idea of a logical development, the possibility of new doctrine being added to the faith is inescapable.
2. By such a theory, the dogma proclaimed by Pius XII and any dogmas that may be made by future popes have been lifted out of the arena of controversy. They cannot be questioned and need not be defended. Contention may only fasten on to the theory of development that makes them possible.
3. If this theory of development through a mystical process be

[1] *The Tablet*, 28 October 1950.

granted, there are indefinite possibilities to the nature and number of dogmas that may be proclaimed in the future at Rome.

Having in mind the purpose of justifying the Roman Catholic dogma of the Assumption, Canon Smith may be excused for not reminding his readers that the theory of development he expounds has not yet been sanctioned at Rome The papal bull *Munificentissimus Deus*, in fact, strikes a conservative note. After quoting the well-known words of the Vatican decree that "the gift of the Holy Spirit promised to Peter's successors does not mean that he will reveal to them fresh truths", the bull asserts that "the said doctrine is grounded upon Scripture, is deeply implanted in the minds of the faithful, is attested by the immemorial practice of the Church, is fully in harmony with other revealed truths, and has been lucidly set forth by the learned labours of theology".[1] Whatever may be said about these claims, they are in contrast from Canon Smith's idea of the non-rational development of this dogma. Nevertheless Canon Smith voices a view which is becoming fashionable among, and which may be inevitable for, Roman Catholic theologians. At the moment the ambiguity of the position admits a certain convenience, for while Rome maintains for the ordinary believer that her doctrine is unchanging, the theologians explain to the more inquisitive how doctrines may now be defined which were formerly not only undiscovered, but which were admittedly inaccessible. The disharmony behind this expedience must at last become apparent however, and a choice eventually be made between a theory which maintains that all doctrine has been conserved from the beginnings of Christianity and a theory of development which embraces doctrines unknown to the Fathers. Both theories present difficulties of a serious and intricate nature.

VICTOR BENNETT.

Creation and Incarnation: Some Further Thoughts

IN two interesting and thoughtful articles recently published by THEOLOGY (Vol. LII, 354, and Vol. LIII, 366) Mr W. S. Boycott has been drawing our attention to the importance of considering the Incarnation in the setting of the Creation. As his quotations show, the New Testament was vividly aware of this setting. This awareness was continued into the following centuries. One has only to think of Irenaeus' doctrine of anakephalaiosis and of the way in which in early eucharistic liturgies the central act of our redemption was commemorated alongside the act of our creation. Indeed, that God the Redeemer was one with God the Creator was the fundamental metaphysical point that had to be argued against the Gnostics. The only Saviour-God who brought redemption to the ancient world was the God who saved what he himself had created.

Mr Boycott has brought to our notice facts neglected in much contemporary religion. One group is apt to concentrate upon "personal

[1] Translated by Mgr Knox, *The Tablet*, 23 December 1950.

belief in Christ" or "personal redemption through Christ". Another group concentrates upon the Church with particular emphasis upon ministerial order and Sacraments. Both groups like to consider themselves Apostolic, but both are in danger of forgetting that Paul's view of Christ and the Church takes as its range the reconstitution of all that exists. If Christ and the Church were firmly set in the context of the world's re-creation there would be less of a tendency to regard Christ as the Redeemer merely of individual souls or the Church as a closed society endowed with rules for its maintenance which are unambiguous and unalterable. Mr Boycott has suggested that our view of the Church will be true and comprehensive only if we see it as ideally the fulfilment of God's purpose for creation finally disclosed in Christ. This will mean that we regard the empirical Church here on earth at any given moment as either an effective or an ineffective instrument for the accomplishment of this universal design. If the Church were more conscious of its role as instrument it might become more flexible than it is, at any rate in this country, at present, and so the day of visible union would be brought nearer. "The Church only exists then when it is the flexible instrument of the Lord through which the Spirit can deal in creative power with the problems of each new age as it comes along."[1]

I should like to suggest two ways in which the insistence which Mr Boycott lays upon the continuity of Incarnation with Creation may be applied to standing theological problems.

1. A question often asked is: "Is a Natural Theology possible?" and if an affirmative answer is returned, another question follows: "How is it related to Revealed Theology?" Now these are at root important and meaningful questions, being inquiries about the sources for our knowledge of God. Yet that the questions should be framed in this manner is regrettable. The terms Natural and Revealed need careful definition. All terms need this of course, and definition of terms can lead quite satisfactorily to a general exposition of the subject matter to which they refer. Still the trouble about the terms "natural" and "revealed" is that they are found to require such a lot of definition. Moreover it is usually held that all knowledge is in some degree both natural and revealed, so that the terms do not seem to indicate so clear a contrast as at first sight may appear. The same holds for the contrast Natural—Supernatural. All religious knowledge (if it is knowledge and not fancy) is supernatural in so far as it is evoked by an apprehension of God; equally it is natural in so far as all cognition occurs through the medium of human faculties. Attempts then to describe contrasts and distinctions through these pairs of terms often seem artificial, and one feels that the train of thought would have been more free and the conclusion more incisive if another conceptual framework had been selected. The kind of conceptual framework desirable for a search into the sources for our knowledge of God is one which is concrete,

[1] The Bishop of Coventry: William Ainslie Memorial Lecture for 1947, p. 24. Dr Gorton has already stressed that the Lord the Church knows is "The Lord of Creation and of History".

expressive of unity, but also capable of expansion into diversity, and which does not begin with the announcement of antitheses which could mean a number of things but end up by meaning nothing very specific.

We are after all Christians, and we should begin with Christ. Christian philosophy is an interpretation of that datum, and sooner or later its terminology is obliged to correspond to the datum. Mr Boycott shows that the New Testament unmistakably assigns to Christ cosmological functions. He is regarded as Alpha and Omega, the one through whom history began and in whom it will be consummated. God's revelation in Christ is placed inescapably in the context of his creative work in general. Christ is the ultimate meaning of the world-process. Perhaps the most succinct and pregnant expression of this fact—which was intensely *felt* as a fact and not put forward as a secondary speculation—is given in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. The manifestation of the Logos in the Flesh is set against the background of his pre-existent activity in creation: for "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (v. 3). Now, if we select this as our basis, the questions that would arise would be somewhat as follows: "How do we describe the activity of the Logos outside Christ and in him, and how are the two related?" And again: "How, within Christian knowledge itself, does the presence of the Logos in Christ relate to the presence of the Logos in creation generally?" I may not have formulated these questions well, but my main point is that if discussions in Christian epistemology took as their *point de départ* the issue as stated in the Johannine Logos-doctrine, they would be beginning with something concrete and with that conviction of unity in divine revelation which (as Mr Boycott has so amply illustrated) is characteristic of the New Testament as a whole.

To answer either question there would certainly be need to define Logos, Verbum, Word, in which process of definition historical scholarship, powers of linguistic analysis, and metaphysical insight would join hands. And this process of defintion should lead us nearer to the heart of the problem than the definition of terms like Natural-Supernatural, Natural-Revealed. Compared with the term Logos these are more question-begging and abstract, and less capable of unifying the fact of divine activity with the fact of its human apprehension. They will doubtless enter into the discussion, but when and how cannot be said in advance. Logos is a resoluble symbol. It calls for elucidation in a series of propositions. Just because it is a term encompassing a number of closely connected yet different ideas its definition could prove informative and relevant. No other term indicates so well unity in diversity, the impression of which it is meant to convey in John's prologue. Primitive Christianity was convinced that the action of God in Creation and Incarnation was one. It was also convinced that the form of action in the two spheres was different, otherwise there would have been no Gospel. Justice must be done to both unity and diversity, and if a term is desired from which thought may start and around which stock questions may

centre, then Logos seems as fruitful a one as any. To start from scholastic antitheses would be false to the New Testament experience and has at times landed acute thinkers in a rather lifeless circle of argument.

Possibly one of the greatest misfortunes in modern Protestant theology is that the term "word" (or the phrase "Word of God") has become severed from its context in the Johannine prologue and been used to signify God as "addressing" or "speaking to" or "coming to" man in a mode quite removed from any possible experience of him through the created order. Certain extreme positions have been possible largely because those who have occupied them have not started from the simple and sure Logos-doctrine of John and its developments from the Apologists onwards, but have chosen to adopt arbitrary contrasts such as natural-supernatural, natural-revealed, the order of nature—the order of grace, and to put the word or Word of God on one side of these pairs of contrasts. That is why so much modern theology appears to be schematic and hopelessly *a priori*. John's speculations, whatever be their literary antecedents, arose for him spontaneously out of a background of empirical fact. That background yielded the basic conviction that the one whom he knew and proclaimed disclosed a principle and life out of which the world had been constituted from the first. For those who took John as their starting-point any distinctions would have to be made without infringing the identity of the Logos in Creation and Incarnation, and there would always have to remain a sense in which it would have been impossible for the Incarnation to be what it was if the Creation had not been what it was, a sense in which it would be as wrong to deny that Incarnation implies Creation as to assert that Creation implies Incarnation.

I suggest that e.g. in Part I of his Gifford Lectures Emil Brunner fails, as he has already done in his book *The Mediator*, to realize how deep is the setting of the Incarnation in the Creation. This failure follows the two paths indicated above. On the one hand Brunner is determined in his thought by arbitrary categories. This time the contrasts are God-truth and world-truth, God-knowledge and world-knowledge, supported by an even more arbitrary exposition of the "imago dei" (p. 78) where we are asked to conceive of a relation subsisting without any essential correspondence in the terms to be related. On the other hand, whilst at one point the Johannine prologue is fairly summarized its implications are never drawn. After quoting it on p. 64 Brunner proceeds to make the astonishing assertion that "this Logos is not an immanent element of the human mind or spirit". When the prologue is alluded to on p. 71 the activity of the Logos in creation is completely overlooked, and we are not surprised to discover on p. 40 that the Word of God can be equated with Christ without qualification. The Word remains on one side of a fence which Brunner has constructed. Brunner's is what Mr Boycott refers to as the "glass-case" Christ.

2. A realization of the continuity of Incarnation with Creation also bears upon the more practical question of the believer's experi-

ence of Christ. What is this experience? For Paul it was mystical in character: I in Christ, Christ in me. Is this mystical element normative for all experience of Christ? Christian tradition answers yes. People whose viewpoints diverge elsewhere would be found to agree that what is essential to Christian experience is the "dying and rising with Christ". How does this "dying and rising" occur and how do we know that they occur? It is possible to see the necessity of union with Christ in these acts and still to be puzzled as to how it is attainable. One may desire the end while remaining in darkness about the means.

It must be admitted that many answers to the last question are not helpful. Some stress the sacraments, especially that of Holy Communion, as the great mode of entrance into union with Christ through mystical incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church. Others again would prefer to place the sacraments in a wider setting and let them take their specific and unique meanings from that setting. Some appeal to an experience of conversion or repeated conviction which, being separable from ordinary life, are moments when we look away from the woof and warp of everyday creaturely existence to a justifying and sanctifying Christ and *know* by a distinct and isolated piece of awareness that we are accepted of, and bound to, him. Others again are not gifted with this type of awareness and are rightly annoyed when asked to seek it.

The doctrine, or rather fact, of creation contributes to a wider and more understandable answer to the question. The doctrine states among other things that the reason why anything exists and so the reason why anything has meaning or value is that it is part of an order of existence brought into being and maintained in being by God's spirit. The very nature of existence and so of the smallest part of existence is to reveal in its own way the God whose work it is. Any point of existence may be a sufficient vehicle of his presence (e.g. bread and wine); at any point God and man may meet each other provided God is willing to reveal himself and man is willing to discover God. The world is not an expression of God as the monist understands it, nor alien to God as certain dualists have understood it. It is God's *creation*, the appointed sphere where at any point in space and time God's spirit may move man to a recognition of himself.

This notion of the world as a place created to reveal God to man must underlie any doctrine of God's special manifestation in it if any belief about our communion with God through that special manifestation is to become at all intelligible. The answer to our question "How is union with the risen Christ attainable?" becomes luminous only if we first recognize that the God whom we are to know in Christ is the God who has created the whole structure of life as the field of his self-disclosure. Experience of Christ becomes a fact when we realize that since it is according to the pattern of his nature and by his power that God created the universe, his spirit is to be found according to the measure in which we expect to find it and determine to understand it in every detail of the created order

ordained by him. Christian experience will then be regarded as something not supra-natural but in the deepest sense natural, not abstract but concrete, attainable not outside created life but from within it, being the way in which the disciple is enabled to discover Christ's image in persons and things which have been created through his agency and are destined to reach their perfection in him. This is but to say that Christian experience is the capacity to discern the reality, both in ourselves and our environment, that underlies appearances.

In our quest for knowledge of the risen Christ our first belief should be that he whom we seek is already there, in however obscure or distorted a fashion, in the material that comes to hand. Our second belief will be that when we set out to deal with life after the manner of Christ what was before immanent and concealed will become transcendent and open. Revelation means an "unveiling", and to live in the light of revelation is to allow what was formerly hidden to come to view. That mystical experience of union with Christ to which Paul bears such strong witness will supervene upon our determination to work in the world through every detail of its ordering that will of Love by which it was created. Christian experience is a piecemeal process. It starts when a man awakens to his own true nature and attempts to penetrate to the true nature of the world around him. The man of faith is the man who regards his efforts to discern the real meaning of existence as the ministry of Christ's Risen Spirit within him, and if the faith is unfeigned and the efforts unceasing God will have provided all that we have any right to ask.

There should be no need to add that there is no question of denying the historical uniqueness of Christ or of minimizing the importance of our attending to the historical Incarnation. At all times we must "look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith".[1] Yet we do not "look unto him" separately in some mysterious non-natural moment of awareness, as though the further we removed ourselves from the ordinary course of events the nearer we came to him. He is personally present within us and without us as we sincerely attempt to abide by his laws and assume his "mind" at each turn in a world whose very constitution is that it was made "by him and for him" in whom "all things consist".[2]

In conclusion I wish to thank Mr Boycott for his articles. For it has always seemed to me that his theme is one which has been overlooked in Western theology to its considerable detriment, and that ironically enough those who have overlooked it most drastically are the theologians who are ostensibly most Biblical.[3] Apologetic is not strengthened by presenting Christ as an ontological *tour de force*. Christian truth is not advanced nor Christian character built up by a false idea of the miraculous.

H. P. Owen.

[1] Heb. 12. 2. [2] Col. 1. 16, 17.

[3] It is a current fashion to dismiss glibly the idealist philosophers of the last century, and yet they often "saw Christ steadily and saw him *whole*" as many of the contemporary neo-orthodox do not.

Great Preachers—X. Jubilee Young

WELSH preachers, like Welsh Rugby footballers, are idols of the street. For preaching, like Rugby football, versifying, choir-singing, is part of the common culture of the Welsh. It is not exclusively, or even primarily, religious, *in the narrower sense*. It is Welsh. It may not surprise Welsh people that other nations have preaching and preachers, but many would find it difficult to believe, and all would pronounce that it could never be preaching as they, in Wales, know it.

Over the centuries—for preaching is no new thing among the Welsh—there has grown up a voluminous store of pulpit lore. This was, and still is to some extent, the tradition of the common people, handed down from generation to generation. Conversation among them almost invariably veers round to preaching and preachers. Great occasions are recalled, and re-enacted, with the sermon being repeated almost word for word. In this way Mathews-Ewenny, Brynsiencin, Gwalchmai, and many another giant of the Welsh pulpit of the past, has been brought to life to a younger generation: but brought to life so vividly that those who could never have heard them in the flesh are later convinced that they have listened to them all, and tell their children of the days of greatness which they experienced when these princes reigned in the Golden Age.

One has to check oneself now lest one should give as a personal recollection what is but a piece of the common tradition of the Welsh pulpit. One could preach a sermon by Thomas Charles Edwards on the text "To me to live is Christ", and believe that one had heard it with one's own ears from the lips of that great Principal and preacher. But out of the mists of childhood memory will emerge a small gathering in a tiny Bethel, and an aged deacon reproducing for the benefit of his young listeners not only the words but the tones and gestures of Thomas Charles Edwards. So do preachers and preaching live on in Wales.

It is not surprising therefore that whereas in England there is no Spurgeon or Parker today, Wales has still its Jubilee Young, and only lost its Philip Jones yesterday.

These names are not chance comparisons; they belong together. Philip Jones could be as roguish and scintillating as Parker at his best, and if Jubilee Young lacks something of Spurgeon's humour, it is in this alone that Welshmen would consider him to fall short of the great Victorian Baptist.

So the line of great preachers in Wales is unbroken. Jubilee Young's immediate predecessor at Sion Llanelly was none other than E. T. Jones, who swung into the firmament of Welsh preachers at the close of the last century and shone with ever-increasing brilliance. It was in 1931 that Jubilee Young left Felinganol, where for seventeen years he had exercised a preaching ministry which had extended to every nook and cranny of the Welsh Baptist denomination. There can scarcely have been a single member of the Baptist Church—north, south, east, or west Wales—who did not hear Jubilee

Young during those years, such was his popularity, and his readiness to go wherever he was asked.

He was born, as might be gathered, in 1887, the jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. His father had been invited to become a student for the Baptist ministry, but had declined, choosing rather to be an active layman. This he truly was, and with the help of a wife who could justly be described as a mother in Israel not only served the church faithfully, but fashioned a home on such Christian lines that their four sons became Baptist ministers.

Not all men who have risen to the ministry from such a background become outstanding preachers. But when the man is a Jubilee Young, sensitive, profoundly human, and of an all-embracing sympathy, early impressions are deep and lasting. The struggle of his parents to bring up a large family on very inadequate means, whilst at the same time seeking to maintain a moral and religious excellence, never left him. So the family always looms large in the preaching of Jubilee Young. Just as there is that common touch which he acquired from his humble beginnings and his early years as a draper's assistant.

For, as with most great preachers of Wales, Jubilee Young had none of those advantages of public school and university. He had the other advantages of earning his own living, side by side with those to whom later he was to minister—learning their ways, understanding their needs. As with Ezekiel, he sat where they sat, so that now he preaches out of their condition to their condition. His tongue is tuned to their ears, because his heart beats in sympathy with theirs.

Here then is the first condition of his greatness. In this sense he was separated from his mother's womb to preach the Gospel. And it was as if by instinct that he knew in childhood that preaching alone was sufficient to the task of changing the lives and conditions of life of the people into whose fellowship he was born, and among whom he was brought up.

It comes as no surprise to those who have sat under the spell of his preaching to learn that as a boy of ten he would be found on a Saturday afternoon sitting on the platform of the station, not watching the trains, as would other boys, but watching the male passengers alight, in an attempt to distinguish the preachers who were travelling to fulfil their week-end engagements in the town where he lived. Before he was out of his teens he had heard most of the great preachers of those days, and in this he was helped by an understanding employer.

In all the Welsh churches then there were half-yearly and annual preaching services. Two preachers would preach on two days, usually Sunday and Monday, at six services. One or other would preach morning and afternoon, and both at night. In a place like Tonypandy with its dozen or more chapels there would scarcely be a week-end during Jubilee Young's youth without a special preaching service. As a concession to his love for preaching the draper for whom he worked allowed the young lad a free Monday morning on these special occasions, in spite of their frequency.

Everything was now pointing to the lad's future. And in 1907 he entered the Old College School at Carmarthen, in preparation for the entrance examination to one of the theological colleges. At the end of three years at this preparatory school he accepted a "call" to Capel Rhondda, Pontypridd, without any further training. Two influences decided him in this course. His brother Owen was about to embark on a similar course, and Jubilee undertook to aid him in this. And, secondly, there was always upon him the sense of the urgency of preaching the gospel.

This sense of urgency has never left him. Whether he was right or wrong in accepting the burdens and responsibilities of the ministry with such scant scholastic preparation is a question that does not admit of an unqualified answer. The Welsh pulpit was not then marked for scholarship. Indeed, the opposite was true. It was believed by preachers and congregations alike that scholarship was inhibiting to the preacher, as in many cases it was, and still is. Jubilee Young would no doubt have gained much had he passed on to the university and theological college, where his capacity for study would have found full scope. But he would, too, have lost much. The years that he would have spent there were now devoted to the reading and meditation which were more directly in line with his consuming passion to preach the gospel. Moreover, he was never far removed from the people, with the result that no barriers, social or intellectual, have arisen between him and the multitude. The common people hear him gladly, and, if with wide eyes and open mouths, it is never the wonder of the simple for the clever, but the admiration of the lover for the beloved. He answers their need. He awakens in them a response to those things of which they were but half-conscious, but which, under the illumination of his words, they immediately recognize, and acknowledge to be those things for which their souls thirsted.

That is his genius—if genius can ever be applied to a preacher. There is no striving after effect. There is no profundity in the academic sense. He says nothing that anyone else could not say. His illustrations are homely and native. They are gleaned from the day-to-day life of the people who hear them when he preaches. Seldom are they literary; frequently they are anecdotal, often scriptural. But when they are scriptural they are, in a sense, anecdotal, for what happened to the characters of the Old and New Testaments is personal to the Welshman.

Here we reach the central fact of Jubilee Young's greatness as a preacher. He more than anyone else in the Welsh pulpit today brings into one contemporaneous stream the characters of the Bible and the Welshman of the twentieth century. The Bible is never an ancient document in his hands: it is a contemporary book. And just as the characters of the book are made to be living, contemporary people, so too the incidents of the Bible are refashioned so as to have happened today, in the Llanelly Steelworks, on Swansea Bay, or up the Black Mountains.

This, of course, has always been the outstanding characteristic of

Welsh preaching. It is not by accident that in Wales as nowhere else (*except among negroes who have brought the Bible to life in their spirituals*) have parents taken to name their children after Biblical characters. There are more Jeremiahs, Elijahs, Jonahs, Johns, Davids, and so on, to the square yard of Wales than to the square mile of the rest of Britain. For this the characteristic, Biblical preaching of the Welsh pulpit (like the *Negro Spiritual*) is principally responsible.

It is into this heritage of preaching that Jubilee Young stepped, and himself perpetuated. But to this heritage he has brought his own individual gifts. He has a voice of unusual range and quality. He has no affectation of speech. His accent is common—being as clear to the north as to the south Welshman. His words are in common use among the Welsh-speaking natives, and his language is a refined colloquial one. He has from his earliest days had the appearance of one who has worn himself out and is heading for a breakdown in health, so that his appearance in the pulpit conveys a sense of the urgency that has always distinguished his preaching. Only one who feels desperately urgent about what he has to say would attempt to say it, if he felt half as ill as Jubilee Young has always looked.

So, the moment he appears and begins to mount the pulpit he has won the sympathy, quite unconsciously and certainly unintentionally, of his congregation. The delivery of his text and the first ten or fifteen minutes of his sermon tend to deepen this sympathy between the audience and himself. His speech during these early stages is a little rapid and slightly breathless, as though speaking is something of an effort. Then, with his congregation hanging upon every word lest it should be his last, he himself is caught up in the spirit of preaching. His sentences become more rhythmic. What to anyone but a Welshman would be regarded as a "sing-song" measure flows from his lips. For the words are now sung rather than spoken, and there is a warmth of emotion breathing through the whole. This is the "hwyl", that indescribable quality which is the inspiration of the Welshman when he is about a task over which he is in dead earnest.

The "hwyl" may last for thirty minutes or three-quarters of an hour, and as long as it lasts the congregation and the preacher are united as one in the power of the Gospel, "lost in wonder, love, and praise".

Here is preaching as Welshmen know and appreciate it. Out of it has grown much of what is most valuable in Welsh national life and culture. Indeed, it forms the bulk of Welsh culture. And if its influence in the future is likely to be less than in the past, it will be due to the fact that in Jubilee Young we are possibly seeing the last of the giants of Welsh traditional preaching.

SELWYN GUMMER.

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE GOSPEL, WOMEN, AND THE CHURCH

To the Editor of THEOLOGY.

DEAR SIR,

I am writing, as a church worker possessing an honours degree in geography and a post-graduate diploma in theology, concerning the article by Mrs Niebuhr on "The Gospel, Women, and the Church". From my own personal point of view I feel a very clear vocation to pastoral work and to the teaching and preaching of the Gospel, but I would on no account whatever allow myself to be ordained as a priest if such a thing were ever possible in the Church. The reason, however, for this is rather different from that generally given or those quoted by Mrs Niebuhr.

So far as I can see the question of sexual attractiveness is largely irrelevant. It is a two-way argument and thoroughly inconclusive. There seem, however, to be no dire results of having women lay preachers in the Methodist Church. There is, however, a much bigger question, the question of the whole make-up of the male–female relationship. Though I should say that it is quite false to state that women are dominated by sex in a way that men are not, unless they have unfortunately nothing else to think about or do on account of lack of education or adequate employment, yet I do believe that a woman is essentially made to work for and to help men in their work; that women are made to be second in command, to help and advise rather than to govern; that is, that we are made subsidiary to men physically and psychologically; and most of us know it. Spiritually and intellectually, however, there seems to be no fundamental difference. This view is, I believe, true to the teaching of St Paul, who, while asserting that the relationship of husband and wife should reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5. 22–end), thereby indicating woman's dependent position, also says that in Christ there can be neither male nor female (Gal. 3. 28).

Now, a priest's work is essentially mediatorial between God and man; sacramental priesthood, therefore, seems by right to belong only to the dominant sex, though of course women must necessarily share in Christ's priesthood by union with him and in the priesthood of the Church as his body (1 Pet. 2. 9). Most of my fellow workers would, I think, agree with me in saying that we do not, therefore, want the sacramental priesthood. What some of us do want is the status of lay reader, with its chance to teach and preach the Gospel

and to care for people in a parish. This work needs doing and is often left undone through the shortage of clergy and the restrictions forbidding a woman to minister to the felt need. Only a woman worker in a parish can understand the spiritual agony of seeing a need unsatisfied and people unfed, whom she could reach and help if only the Church would let her. It is like being trained as a doctor and then being forced to watch people die when you could save them. Women often care more about people than men do and can enter more fully and sympathetically into their lives and their difficulties, and all this is of tremendous benefit in a parish. The Church is losing much willing and competent labour, which it very sorely needs if England is to be saved for Christ, by this old-fashioned prejudice against women. I know what St Paul said, but his instructions about women being veiled were, after all, when they were prophesying in church (1 Cor. 11. 4–5). In actual fact, at present the clergy over-preach and the women feel frustrated in their work through lack of any opportunity to do so. It is just plain silly!

Incidentally, it seems to me that the Church of England is the most backward Church in the world in its attitude to women. Both the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches allow women to learn theology and to contribute to theological discussion without being laughed at. I have myself attended a Roman Catholic theological conference in Oxford, of a standard reserved entirely for clergy in the Anglican Church, and I have heard an Orthodox woman give a theological paper at the conference of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius. I understand that the Orthodox Church also allows women to preach in church in Greece without any kind of fuss. I have myself been present at many Orthodox Eucharists at which the singing of the choir was led by a woman and prayers of thanksgiving and devotion were said by her aloud after the liturgical action had finished. There are also, I believe, Greek Orthodox deaconesses.

I am a convert. When I came into touch with life in the Church of England a few years ago I discovered, with a shock, that the attitude of many of the clergy to women, one of contemptuous amusement that they should ever want to learn theology or help in pastoral work in any way, was fifty years behind the attitude of the average layman, who now accepts women as fellow workers quite naturally in most other walks of life. Ordinary lay church people are often surprised and amused by the restrictions imposed by the Church on the activities of women workers in a parish, and, if they knew the full truth, many of them would be really shocked.

May I plead also for more opportunity for women workers to continue their theological study and interest after leaving their college or university? I have been a little more fortunate than some, but usually in a diocese everything that is done is for the clergy only, except the most elementary instruction, while it seems impossible for many clergy to contemplate any kind of discussion or Bible study group including both clergy and women of equal educational status, a thing taken for granted in most other professions. This, so far as

I can see, results in a loss on both sides, for, if men and women are really complementary to each other, as we are taught by the Christian faith, surely a richer understanding of any subject would be obtained by joint discussion. The Church of Rome runs theological study weekends up and down the country for educated women. They are, I believe, of a high standard and led by first-class people. Could not the Church of England do something similar if the clergy remain adamant in their refusal to share? It would meet a crying need.

Yours faithfully,
(Miss) E. M. KAY.

15, ACRE HOUSE AVENUE,
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To the Editor of THEOLOGY.

SIR,

In connexion with Mrs Niebuhr's article on "The Gospel, Women, and the Church", may I call attention to three articles on "The Ordination of Women" by the Bishop of Oxford which appeared in the *Oxford Diocesan Magazine* in August, September, and October, 1948. They deal conclusively from a practical and theological point of view with many of the problems that Mrs. Niebuhr raises.

Yours faithfully,
H. BRADFORD.

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To the Editor of THEOLOGY.

DEAR SIR,

In the interesting correspondence on this subject surely not enough weight has been given to what for many parish priests remains the salient fact about the popular and growing practice of cremation, namely that it is tending towards an increase of "suburban mentality" in widest commonalty spread. "Sick people are isolated, and death, as far as possible, is not allowed to happen visibly in a suburb. Even the word 'death' is almost taboo; people find the whole subject embarrassing. But how can you appreciate the miraculous unity of mind and body, spirit and incarnation, unless you have watched the last breath of a person you loved . . . Mentality is what is left of the soul when you subtract the crucifying experiences that bear fruit in more energetic and vital human relationships. . . . How can we speak deeply about God or King Lear in an environment that has been artificially preserved and sterilized?" (*The Christian Future; or, The Modern Mind Outrun,* by Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, pp. 13 f.).

Here the practical attitude of the Church of Rome, as distinct from its theological reasons, would seem to have much to commend it. "The obvious reason why cremation is forbidden is that the body

during life was sanctified as a temple of the Holy Ghost and a tabernacle of the Holy Eucharist, and as long as it remains in the form of a human body, even though mutilated, it has to be treated with respect. *Furthermore, cremation is calculated to disturb the faith of simple folk. If, under exceptional circumstances, the Church granted permission for, or tolerated, cremation, the faithful would be instructed correctly in the matter* (cf. *The Instruction of the Holy Office*, June 19, 1926)" (*Moral and Pastoral Theology*, by H. Davies, iv. 391. Italics mine).

The pages of the New Testament know nothing of an alibi to the ugly facts of life and death. They know everything about the tender care which goes with sepulture. The horror with which a suggestion of a transportable cremation field plant for the armies of the future would be received might cause us to wonder whether the last word has been said on cremation. *Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.*

Yours sincerely,
A. B. LAVELLE.

THE VICARAGE,
WEDNESBURY,
STAFFS.

BOOK REVIEWS

TRADITION AND THE SPIRIT. By Daniel Jenkins. Faber. 12s. 6d.

The subject of Tradition should be one of particular interest to students of theology to-day. An intense and prolonged re-examination of the original sources of Christianity has now been taking place in theological circles for about a century, and has taken the form, first, of a thorough and often apparently destructive analysis of the springs of Christian doctrine, and later, in our own day, of a tentative but steadily maintained re-articulation and synthesis of the same material. To both these movements of theological thought the subject of Tradition is of first importance. This was really the subject of Newman's *Developement of Christian Doctrine*. This was in fact the great question that interested George Tyrrell and stimulated his restless search for religious truth. Tradition is a subject which occupies a surprisingly large part of that immense, erudite, and yet curiously crude work, Harnack's *History of Dogma*. This is the subject upon which in our own lifetime the Roman Church has committed herself irretrievably, throwing her usual conservatism to the winds. It is a point upon which the Eastern Orthodox Church has unusually explicit teaching. It is a subject which should particularly appeal to the theologians of the Ecumenical Movement, for it contains remarkable possibilities of fruitful discussion and perhaps of trans-confessional agreement.

But it is not a subject which has been much considered in recent English theological publications. Apart from a rather unsatisfactory book by the late Dr Moffatt and a very useful and important chapter in Dr Prestige's *Fathers and Heretics*, very little important work

upon the subject has appeared in English. The time is ripe for a really weighty work on Tradition. It is therefore with special interest that one opens Professor Daniel Jenkins's new book.

The book has many excellences. The author makes a sustained and successful effort to be fair-minded; he freely criticizes Catholics, Protestants, and Anglicans, but is never unjust to any. He is fertile in stimulating and very often original ideas. Over and over again this reviewer found himself as he read nodding his head, not in sleep but in satisfied agreement at a point well put. In his course Daniel Jenkins handles very well such diverse questions as "private judgment" (p. 33), Christian liberty (p. 67), the Christian's way of discovering God's will (p. 69), inter-communion (p. 95), the "form" of the Church (p. 97), infant baptism (p. 102), the souls in prison (end of Cap. VII), scholasticism (pp. 115–117), and modern so-called "materialism" (p. 157). He accuses the Church of England, not at all unjustly, of archaism, and the Church of Ireland, with no less truth, of even more intense archaism (pp. 120–121). The whole of Cap. VII might be described as an illuminating commentary on C. H. Dodd's famous Chichester Letter. He has a very useful note upon the modern attitude to the Creeds (pp. 130–131(, a particularly sore point with Congregationalists, but one about which Daniel Jenkins can give a very good reason for the faith that is in him. In short, he touches a multitude of subjects, and very few that he does not adorn.

But is it enough that Daniel Jenkins should remain a sort of theological Oliver Goldsmith? When all is said and done, this work is no more than a very interesting theological pamphlet, discussing in a very stimulating manner the interaction of Tradition (in all its senses), Gospel, and Spirit, beginning with the Old Testament and ending with modern technologically conditioned society. There is no sign in the book that the author has read Newman, Harnack, or Tyrrell (though he has read Prestige's essay). or made any deep study of the problems raised or battles fought in connexion with his subject. This would be no fault if a pamphlet was what was called for. But a pamphlet to justify its existence should be struck out of the author's brain by the impact of a particular event, bringing a special need for a brief, pithy, and forceful word to be spoken in season. *Tradition and the Spirit* is not such a work. The publishers indeed claim for it that it maintains "a high standard of constructive thinking". This is an excessive claim for a work which covers so large a field in the small compass of 193 pages. We think that so obviously gifted a theologian as Professor Jenkins should by now be attempting work of a deeper and more lasting kind than this. We recommend him to take Horace's advice over his next book, *nonumque prematur in annum*. The conditions of the publishing trade will magnificently assist such a resolution.

One or two cavils should perhaps be recorded. What the author has to say about sacraments is both interesting and refreshing, but we are Anglican enough to be rather suspicious of his tendency to describe their function as *primarily* pedagogic: "the Lord's Supper, which is pre-eminently the ordinance which testifies to the con-

tinuity . . . the ordinance designed to maintain the Church in the knowledge that . . ." (p. 93); "baptism is that act which testifies in the most dramatic way that . . ." (p. 104). This is the sort of doctrine that the XXXIX Articles bracket in a "not only"; and unless we go further with their "but also", we stand in grave danger of intellectualizing the means (or as Professor Jenkins might prefer, the moments) of our redemption. Finally, we have no great sympathy with the views of E. J. Mascall, but we are sure that he deserves the title "Dr" rather than "Mr" on p. 126.

R. P. C. Hanson.

Shuttleworth.

The Old Testament and Modern Study. A Generation of Discovery and Research. Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study. Ed. by H. H. Rowley. O.U.P. 25s.

This book invites comparison with the two previous volumes of essays by members of the Society for Old Testament Study, *The People and the Book* (1925) and *Record and Revelation* (1938). But this new collection is not just intended as a further decennial survey, and in fact it seeks to cover the same general field as both the two earlier books. It is meant to record and assess the significant work done on the Old Testament since the close of the first World War. This is probably the most fertile and crowded period of Biblical study since the end of the nineteenth century, and it is idle to expect that any one work, even when it is a co-operative effort, should cover every aspect of it. In the present instance, the editor's own *Relevance of Apocalyptic* (2nd edit., 1947) no doubt justifies the omission of any section on apocalyptic or eschatology, though there are valuable if scattered references to these topics. The absence of a chapter on the history of Israel is perhaps more to be regretted and few will concur with the statement in the Introduction that, in the period under review, "no new trends can be discerned in the treatment of Israelite history", when they reflect on Alt's and Noth's investigations of the early amphictyonic organization, the stimulating suggestions of S. A. Cook and the radical views of Torrey about the exilic period, or Bickermann's analysis of the Maccabean rebellion, to mention only a few points. On the other hand, if we wonder at the almost complete neglect of the problems of post-exilic times in the book, that is only a reflection of the comparative lack of interest in this period of late years and a pointer to important work still needing to be done.

The essays are by a representative selection of leading English Old Testament scholars and two from abroad, Otto Eissfeldt and Walter Baumgartner. It is obviously impossible in a short review to do justice to the contributions: but if a general impression may be gained from them all, it is of the dominant and creative position now held by Scandinavian scholarship, which represents a distinct, though by no means uniform, point of view on the Old Testament. The names of Pedersen, Mowinckel, and Engnell recur over and

over again in these pages—indeed, a little judicious editing might not have been out of place in this connexion to spare both reader and space, for example, from three very similar surveys of Mowinckel's work on the Psalms by different authors. If these essays do nothing else, they will provide the student with a most exhaustive supplement to his textbook reading and "put him in the picture" with regard to work which has even yet to make its full impact on this country.

Professor North's essay on Pentateuchal Criticism is a valuable survey, though perhaps it does not add a great deal to Bentzen's chapter in volume II of his *Introduction*. His criticisms of Pedersen and Engnell, on the other hand, are rather superficial. His conclusion that different strands of oral tradition can be treated in the same way as written documents is to misundertsand the whole problem of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis. No doubt in a sense Ezek. 40–48 is a middle term betwen "D" and "P" in its view of the priesthood—though one might more naturally expect the middle term to be "P", since Aaron is more inclusive than Zadok—but is it necessarily a middle term *chronologically*? The essay of Professor Snaith on the Historical Books serves to reveal how much this field has been neglected in the last thirty years—if Burney is excluded, there has not been a full-scale commentary on Judges, Samuel, or Kings, in that time—but even so, the author misses some important points: e.g. his treatment of Judges 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory from the point of view of the relation of Judges to Joshua and the Pentateuch, and he says nothing of the important contributions of Auerbach and Rudolph to the study of these chapters. Eissfeldt on the Prophetic Literature is the best thing in the book, and his remarks seem to suggest, following the treatment of Widengren, that "ecstasy", a term still needing much clearer definition, may only have been one "technique" employed by prophets who also made use of others. The chapters on the Psalms, by Aubrey Johnson, written from a standpoint more favourable to the Scandinavians than that of most of the contributors, and on the Wisdom Literature by Baumgartner are also very useful surveys. The same can hardly be said of the treatment of Hebrew Religion, which is highly selective and is disapointing even within its chosen limits, mainly because the author does not fully grasp the complexity of the Near Eastern religious background, ignoring e.g. the sort of qualifications made by Gadd and Frankfort. On the other hand, Professor Porteous on Old Testament Theology is in a class by himself for insight and profundity. Perhaps some time Professor Porteous will apply himself to the serious problems latent in the expression, which he welcomes, that "revelation is mediated in historical events". For if Professor North is right when he says that in salvation-history the "bare facts" "are transfigured by faith until they can be almost unrecognizable" (p. 75) and if we are to accept Pedersen's view of the form in which alone we have the Exodus events narrated, then we may cease to be on terms with the honest historian, who will legitimately complain that we are giving him all *Heil* and no *Geschichte*.

Space forbids more than a very cursory mention of the four specialist essays in the book. Professor Albright contributes two on Archaeology, which will be quite indispensable. Professor Winton Thomas's chapter on Textual Criticism is marked by his usual thoroughness and sound sense, though it is a pity that he had no room to mention the "secondary" versions, especially perhaps the Old Latin. Professor Honeyman writes on Hebrew Philology.

Oriel College, Oxford. J. R. Porter.

Trois aspects du problème anglo-catholique au XVII[e] siècle. By Maurice Nédoncelle. Bloud et Gay. 390 francs.

Professor Nédoncelle of Strasbourg, already known in this country as an authority on Newman, has now made an interesting contribution to the study of English church history in the seventeenth century. The eirenical spirit in which the book is written makes it of interest not only to the specialist historian but also to anyone concerned with the relations between the churches of England and Rome.

Each "aspect" is exemplified by an English Roman Catholic writer. The first, and least important, is John Barnes, a turbulent Benedictine always in trouble with the authorities of his order and church, and a fierce critic (before Pascal) of Jesuit moral theology who, in the reign of Charles I, maintained that the XXXIX articles could be interpreted so as not to offend Rome, and that Rome could, without compromising any principle, make substantial concessions over the royal supremacy. Obadiah Walker (1616–99), Master of University College, Oxford, and from the reign of James II onward a declared convert, is a much more considerable theologian. His theology was Biblical and patristic, and the summary of it on pp. 58–63 makes one feel that here is a Roman Catholic who speaks a theological language an Anglican can understand. He has affinities in thought with Newman; and like Newman he was for a time the leader of a Romewards-looking group at Oxford. On this group, and the Roman policy of James II, Professor Nédoncelle comments wisely:

"Ce qui reste vrai, c'est qu'il a rendu un 'Mouvement d'Oxford' impossible pour longtemps. Pour que ce mouvement pût naître, il fallait avoir oublié l'aventure de 1685–89. En définitive, l'enseignement que nous laisse Obadiah Walker est le suivant: si une Église monte dans les fourgons d'un dictateur, elle perd vite la partie qu'elle croit gagner. Son triomphe est éphémère et il lui faut bien des années pour effacer ensuite le tort qu'elle s'est fait."

Christopher Davenport's gallant attempt to reconcile the teaching of the Articles with that of the Council of Trent is better known. But how many people know an anonymous Anglican reply in 1704, in which it is argued that the Tridentine teaching, with a little give and take, is agreeable with the Articles? In an appendix Davenport's comments on the Articles are compared with Newman's.

The book is written with delightful flashes of humour, e.g. the comment (p. 17) on "cet impérialisme érudite" of a Benedictine historian of monastic origins: "Mais les historiens de l'ordre ont eu parfois tendance à annexer le passé."

Two further points call for comment. The author speaks of the prevalence of nominalism in late seventeenth-century Oxford, and hazards an explanation. The matter is mentioned by M. H. Carré, in *Phases of Thought in England* (1949), who draws attention to the fact that there were still, at that time, defenders of the older realism of the calibre of Cudworth and Stillingfleet (both Cambridge men). It looks, from what both authors say, as though the question would repay further study. Secondly, Professor Nédoncelle notes, rather sadly, that in some ways the possibility of reunion between England and Rome looked less remote in the seventeenth century than it does now, and that one reason is that since then has come the proclamation of papal infallibility and the disappearance of "des tendances cisalpines". This has been said before: but Professor Nédoncelle makes the interesting observation that in the earlier period both parties appealed to the past. What was the true teaching of the Fathers on this or that? In this scholarly appeal to antiquity there was a common ground. Now, the tendency of non-Roman Christianity is to look to the future, as if the Church is still coming, and depends on us to be brought to birth. What he does not say, but what I think is true, is that a comparable change is taking place within Roman Catholicism in that a theory of tradition is being evolved which is loosening her hold on antiquity. As therefore in some important respects these different traditions appear to diverge more sharply than before, all the more welcome is a friendly voice from one to the other recalling past possibilities and still courageous enough to believe that "le dialogue historique des catholiques et des anglicans est salutaire même s'il paraît interminable".

Reginald Cant.

St Chad's College,
Durham.

Morals and Man in the Social Sciences. By J. V. Langmead Casserley. Longmans. 12s. 6d.

The Bible Doctrine of Man. By C. Ryder Smith. Epworth Press. 18s. 6d.

An informed and sympathetic theological critique of the social sciences has been badly needed, and as both a theologian and sociologist—he is lecturer in sociology at the University College of the South-west, Exeter—Dr Casserley is one of the few men in Britain who can write it. If this essay—for that is what it is rather than a systematic treatise—does not meet the need, there is every indication that he could write such a book, and if it is as lively as this one, which has hardly a dull page in it, it will be worth waiting for. In the present work Dr Casserley starts from the bias towards relativity in ethics and a naturalistic view of man which he holds to be char-

acteristic of the social sciences, and pleads for "a reverent sociology of religion with a sympathetic theology of society" on the basis of a Christian humanism which does justice to the dignity of each person without harbouring utopian illusions about him. His main purposes are on the one hand to vindicate the necessity of the social sciences against any tendency among theologians to be suspicious of them, and on the other to convince the sociologist that the Christian view of man, with its stress on an irreducible element of uniqueness and freedom in each person, is no bar to the proper development of scientific work in sociology. In the course of the book there are many excursions into allied topics, e.g. the limits of rationality in view of the Marxist concept of ideology and the Freudian concept of rationalization. Many of these discussions are illuminating, but the general drift of the argument is curiously hard to follow. We find, for instance, a chapter on modern secular ethics largely devoted to the Middle Ages. There are also certain deficiencies of exposition. The chapter on the general characteristics of Christian ethics is prefaced by a diagram, but even with its help I found that after three readings the opening pages were still obscure. But the main exposition of Christian humanism is clear enough.

In the first part of the book Dr Casserley is concerned with comparing and contrasting Christian and other types of ethics, ancient and modern, with the particular aim of showing the necessity for, and limits of, a study of the relative expression of ethical beliefs in various societies. The discussion is punctured by frequent skirmishes with some unnamed existentialists and some equally anonymous "anti-catholic, anti-scholastic type of Biblical theologian", both of whom—so the argument runs—see no point in systematic ethical teaching and thus leave a vacuum which is filled by the cult of the state. In contrast to this, Christian ethics of the patristic and medieval period showed itself well aware of the necessity of empirical studies and of the relativities of life, and in this respect is also superior to most philosophical ethics which tend to deal only in absolutes. As far as theological ethics goes the facts seem to be the precise opposite of this. It has been a common criticism that medieval ethics did not do justice to "the autonomy of the secular", and Dr. Casserley's ingenious defence of them in this respect is not convincing, as he himself seems to realize by admitting the main criticism. It is a pity, however, that he feels called upon to expound his view so completely in the absolute and relative natural law terminology, which remains very confusing, especially when he admits that part of the content of the term "natural law"—it is not clear what part—is subject to empirical investigation. Moreover, it is precisely modern Biblical theologians who have gone out of their way to lay a Biblical basis for ethics which does justice to the autonomy of the secular, and it is these same theologians who have been particularly concerned to avoid idolatrous state-worship and to give ethical guidance to their fellows. There may be some who fall under Dr Casserley's strictures, but they have not had any ecumenical influence. (If it is Karl Barth of whom Dr Casserley is thinking, he must know that

Barth's intention and his practical actions, and those of his followers, have been quite different, even if Barth's own theology of society may be thought to be—as I think it—inadequate.) The whole discussion is misleading in its omission of any reference to such work, and on the other side in the exaggerated claims which it makes for "orthodoxy" as having kept relatively free from social conditioning down the ages.

With regard to the discussion of man and the social sciences, the overwhelming temper of social scientists is what has been called "liberal rationalism" or "liberal humanism", and the relativism and naturalism to which Dr Casserley draws attention has been subordinate to that, and chiefly in reaction to a very static view of society. A survey of the work of some leading sociologists, showing these presuppositions (often unavowed), and a critique of the doctrine of man involved would have been illuminating. But Dr Casserley does not do this; he disposes of humanism rather cavalierly and spends his time showing that the uniqueness of each man does not make sociology impossible, when few sociologists have ever held it would. Nor is anything said to the economists who represent the most developed of the social sciences. The book is addressed much more to the theologically than to the sociologically literate, and it is to be feared that not many social scientists will feel it speaks to their condition. Thus for all its liveliness and its many illuminating discussions the book is disappointing on its basic themes. A protest should be made to the publishers for issuing it in a dustcover which, as regards colour scheme and typography, is horrid.

I have left myself very little space to deal with Dr Smith's careful Bible study. Having previously written one book on the Bible Doctrine of Society and another on its doctrine of Salvation, he began a study on its view of Man, but found the material so vast that it is to take four volumes, of which this is the first, and those on the view of Sin, of Grace, and of the Hereafter, are to follow. Obviously these themes overlap, and there is a good deal of cross-referencing, but Dr Smith never gets lost in the by-ways but pursues a clear and steady path through the O.T., LXX, and N.T., under the headings "What a man is" and What a man ought to be". In a sense the theme is well worn and nothing particularly new emerges, but Dr Smith has worked independently and covers succinctly and competently what others tend to expand into vast specialist studies. He provides abundance of evidence and only very brief and careful summaries, so that it is less a book for consecutive reading than for reference. But although detailed it is not dull, and is a fine example of careful, patient, post-critical Biblical exegesis, free from exegetical flights of fancy, which clergy should find very useful, especially as all the Hebrew (and Greek) words are transliterated.

Ronald Preston.

Manchester University.

A South Indian Diary. By J. E. Lesslie Newbigin. S.C.M. Press. 7s. 6d.

Like a jewel, this slender book is of value incommensurable with its size. South India has become a symbol of ecclesiastical controversy rather than a geographical area, and it is easy to forget this in the heat of theological discussion. The long period of discussion which led to the consummation of union between a number of confessions had its climax in a great service in Madras Cathedral after which a number of new bishops were consecrated, of which the author of this book was one. Formerly a missionary of the Church of Scotland, he is now a bishop, and this description of his episcopal work amongst the largely rural people of his large diocese is fascinating in the extreme, and for two reasons. First, it gives an admirable account of the problems and achievements of missionary work with a very vivid and I should say accurate description of conditions in India to-day, with a most commendable freedom from both sentimentality and patronage which mar so many "missionary books". He writes of the Church that is in Madhurai and Ramnad with all its glories and all its weaknesses; he does not say "Here am I, a Britisher far from home, serving in heathen lands: are not these people quaint or benighted?" Secondly, it is an existential account of the nature of the episcopate far more impressive than any large volume on the subject, for here undeniably is a bishop at work, constantly touring, carefully examining candidates for confirmation and then the laying-on of hands, the reconciling of the penitent and the discipline of the recalcitrant, and above all the loving Father in God.

It is clear that the various traditions that now meet in the Church of South India are interpenetrating and modifying one another, and that slowly but decidedly something new in emerging, and there is every reason to suppose that this will be catholic and well as evangelical.

There is a desire for ordered worship, and the new Liturgy is a most encouraging sign. Sometimes there is a tendency to leave too much to the bishop, and sometimes the local congregation forgets that it is part of a wider body and the bishop's visit once more makes them conscious of their wider loyalty. One of the great advantages of the Union is its effect on the relics of caste within the Church, for there was sometimes a tendency for certain castes to be identified with certain denominations; now this is no longer possible. The "mission mentality" dies hard, but the bishop helps greatly to mitigate it.

What a wonderful opportunity Anglicans have got to share with others the truths that they have received, but how tragic if unessentials are presented as important! Bishop Newbigin speaks with pleasure of the good training in churchmanship amongst candidates for confirmation in certain ex-Anglican congreagtions, but also asks why of all the glories of Anglicanism it should be necessary to borrow processions with surplices (amongst people often too poor to own a shirt) and place the altar against the east wall and use it as a shelf for ornaments, when even Roman Catholics are bringing it

into the body of the church and celebrating from behind it. But the bishop welcomes the firm traditions of Anglican worship, for, he says, the churches which have given the greatest liberty of liturgical improvization have given the least training in liturgical principles.

But the best thing about this book is not the light that it sheds on problems of reunion or the nature of the episcopate, but its exquisite description of the people, the several stones in the temple, these poor half-starved, low-caste, often illiterate Tamils who are building up the Church. Sometimes their witness is heroic, sometimes a little comic, but always appealing. One group starve themselves until their wives become Christian. Others are refused employment because of their faith, and though on the verge of death through starvation refuse to apostatize, and their employers abandon the persecution with amazement that such poor men should have such courage. In the towns Christians work in the mills and now Communism issues its challenge. The bishop is interesting about this, for there is no doubt that in many parts of South India Communism and Christianity contend for the souls of men. These poor Christians do not take their religion sadly; old folk-songs are used to express the faith, and dances too. The bishop is welcomed with fireworks and sword dances. Some of the stories told here are intensely moving and vastly encouraging, though the bishop does not hide the fact that his flock are no more free from blemishes than Paul's converts at Corinth; but these poor people who keep their faith even when unvisited in remote areas, and who evangelize their neighbours even when there is no missionary or minister to lead them, deserve the best that can be given them. Their economic and social conditions cannot be ignored, but though the hurricanes that are blowing over Asia may destroy many of our splendid institutions, schools, colleges, and hospitals, the Church will remain, the bishop thinks, because it is so near the ground. One could quote many of the fascinating stories this book contains, but space forbids. Everyone who cares for the world-wide Church should read this book, and one may hope that it may reach those who speak so much about "South India" as an ecclesiastical abstraction, but who have no knowledge of the poor, heroic people out of whom God is slowly and painfully forming his Church.

LEONARD M. SCHIFF.

THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE. Philosophy, Science, and History since Hegel. By Ernst Cassirer. Yale University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege). 30s.

When Mrs Cassirer visited Sweden in 1946, about a year after her husband's death, she obtained a copy of a MS which had been left behind when Cassirer had left Sweden in May 1941 to become visiting Professor of Philosophy at Yale. It is this MS, now translated, which has yielded the present book, which has also, in addition, a preface by Professor Charles W. Hendel, of Yale, himself part-trans-

lator, that sketches the general theme of the book and does something to relate it to the three earlier volumes published in 1906, 1907, and 1920, which, together with the present volume, complete a series on "The Problem of Knowledge in Philosophy and Science in Modern Times". The present volume considers the problem in relation to philosophy, science, and history since Hegel, and while being an integral part of the series is independent enough to be separately readable.

The book is divided into three parts:

(1) In the first part Cassirer surveys, from a philosophical standpoint, the more recent history and development of mathematics and physics, especially in regard of non-Euclidean geometries and the Theory of Numbers. His broad conclusion is, roughly, that the old idea of scientific knowledge as concerned with "hard facts" is no longer tenable, and he quotes Bohr and Heisenberg to show how far distant are the modern techniques of the exact sciences from e.g. those "first models of atoms" which "seemed to satisfy the demand for sensible representation in the most gratifying way" (p. 116). No longer does physics claim to deal with "given", "objective", "fact".

(2) In the second part Cassirer surveys the developments in biological thought and argues that the older controversy between "mechanism" and "vitalism" has now been superseded in a viewpoint which embraces both—holism or organicism. Not without special interest to the theologian are the concluding pages of this section, where Cassirer indicates how biology can, as a result of this newer approach, expect to be teleological without using the "older and traditional idea of purposiveness". It is a suggestion with no little importance for those who wish to see a Christian philosophy of science and yet equally wish to surrender the deistic approach of the older (and even of some newer) teleology.

(3) In the third section Cassirer surveys various views of historical knowledge in the post-Hegel period: Historicism, Romanticism, Positivism, as well as History viewed from e.g. the standpoint of political history or with a Theory of Psychological Types. But he omits any serious discussion of economic history. Perhaps the reason is that the book, written over a short period in 1940, sets together ideas Cassirer had had in mind for some considerable time. In the last fifteen or twenty years economic history has loomed larger in the world of thought, and some of its epistemological implications have been made more plain, by exposition as well as by criticism, but we cannot grumble that Cassirer was too soon for this, any more than we can really regret that not all recent developments in biological thought are surveyed in the second part.

The broad thesis of this third part is that we do injustice to Historicism "when we stress only its negative and destructive side" (p. 324). When the rapid increase of knowledge on all sides gave rise to the danger of "extreme fragmentation" Historicism "showed its consolidating and unifying power" (p. 324). In fact, Historicism may stage a worthy come-back when it leads people to a common *task* and integrates them into some kind of common background.

We often hear to-day of the need for a new synthesis of knowledge, and in this connexion Cassirer's book is relevant in two ways:

(*a*) It shows great insight into the complex thought of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indeed, the first section is the best survey I know of recent trends in mathematics and physics surveyed from a philosophical standpoint. Cassirer's book is quite invaluable as giving us some of the elements which must occur in the synthesis we are seeking. After reading it, we are less likely to be facile, or to fail by ignorance where we think we have succeeded.

(*b*) Yet the reader might say the book offers us no greater help than that; that it is of not much positive help towards creating a new synthesis. But let us be careful. While he warns us that "the era of the great constructive programs" has gone (p. 19), he claims nevertheless that "a unified and comprehensive tendency begins to disclose itself" (p. 18) as we survey contemporary thought. What does he think this tendency to be? I confess I am not very clear. But taking up the comment on Historicism, I think we might venture the suggestion that at any rate Cassirer would sympathize with the idea that a synthesis might be found in some activity much more concrete than discursive knowledge, an activity in which (I think he would say) Historicism may train us. In this sort of way—especially if we were trained not only in a common *task* but in common *worship*—there might come about a specifically Christian synthesis including the sort of detailed and comprehensive survey Cassirer has given us. The suggestion of work and worship affording a synthesis for fragmentary knowledge certainly accords with the practical kindliness which Cassirer showed to those around him, and with the human sympathies which he added to learning and wisdom.

In many ways the book is a fitting climax to the life of an eminent international philosopher. It seems likely that the book, though written in 1940, was planned in 1932 at the time of the centenary of Hegel's death. In any event, Cassirer's eye for detail, his penetrating insight, and above all his encyclopedic learning and the comprehensiveness of his view, make his work philosophy in the grand style indeed. But at the same time it is philosophy which reckons with the techniques and developments of modern science, and which never loses its epistemological interest and concerns. It is philosophy which is not only impressive but respectable.

I. T. Ramsey.

Christ's College,
Cambridge.

Faith Seeks Understanding. By John Coventry, S.J. Sheed and Ward. 7s. 6d.

What Do We Believe? By John Lawson. S.P.C.K. 6s. 6d.

The Theology of Evangelism. By Henry Cook. Carey Kingsgate Press. 6s.

Father Coventry's book is a closely reasoned and lucid explanation of the definition of the nature and "properties" of faith which one finds in any standard text-book of Roman Catholic dogmatic

theology. His particular concern is with the relation between faith and reason, the whole book being very largely an attempt to expound the inner reasonableness of faith by a full analysis of what is happening when a man believes. As the title indicates, he has taken as his main theme St Anselm's phrase *fides quaerens intellectum*, and insists throughout that what we see happening in the activity of Christian belief is not reason seeking out a faith of living, but faith seeking out the understanding not only of itself but of the total context in which it is practised. He begins with an examination of the traditional preamble to faith, and points out that the emphasis there on the demonstrability of the Christian revelation might suggest that certainty comes to faith from outside faith (i.e., from the kind of certainty which pertains to the results of metaphysical, historical, literary or textual inquiry), whereas in fact the certainty and reasonableness of faith are to be drawn out of faith itself. "In its own right and by its own power faith is already reasonable." The rest of the book seeks to establish this contention by a consideration of the nature of faith and its qualities of reasonableness, certainty, supernaturalness, and freedom. The activity of faith is analysed as the total response of the believer to the divinely attested truth which is in Christ, Jesus himself being the divinely endorsed "sign" not only for the apostles who companied with him, but for the whole succession of Christian believers through the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, where "the life of Christ is continued both in its inward reality and in its outward power as a sign". It is not possible in a short review to do justice to the admirable treatment of the properties of faith in Fr Coventry's essay, but what he has to say about certainty in faith is particularly valuable in its stress that certainty is to be conceived not statically but dynamically, as something into which, by the grace of God, we are continually growing, rather than as something which is complete at the start which we need only strive to retain. Again, throughout the book we are never allowed to forget that such elucidation of the faith as is possible never constitutes an "explanation" which can be detached, for understanding, from the worship of the Church. The "explanation" of faith points away from itself to the activity of faith in worship. As an epilogue the author gives a translation of St Augustine's Treatise 26 on St John on which the whole essay is a valuable commentary.

Mr Lawson's book consists of "144 straight questions and plain answers to the teaching of the churches". It is an improvement on earlier books of this kind, such as *Asking them Questions*, in that it makes a clear statement of the difference between the Catholic and Protestant traditions; the whole book has been written with the "eirenical" intention of "building up mutual understanding between the various Christian communions, in anticipation of the desired day of reunion". On the whole Mr Lawson has accomplished his task well, and the book should be of great value for teachers in schools, and parish priests will find it useful for confirmation classes and discussion groups of all kinds.

The title of Mr. Cook's book is misleading. It suggests that we are to find here the Church's activity of evangelism studied in close relation to the central doctrines of the Faith and their implications. However for Mr Cook the relevance of theology for evangelism seems to be purely pragmatic: it will "teach us to understand the terms we use" and it "helps us to conserve the results of our own evangelistic efforts". One feels that Mr Cook's comment that "theology must not be allowed to come between us and evangelism" is true for him in a sense he did not intend, since nowhere in the book are the insights of Christian theology brought to bear on the problems of evangelism. He does not deem it necessary to set the question of evangelism to-day in the context of the ecumenical movement, and although the book is composed of lectures given to Baptist students —they are, however, more in the nature of hortatory sermons suggesting what Fr Coventry calls "the type of Christianity which feeds only on fervour"—it is a pity that they were not acquainted with the work achieved by the Mission de France and the liturgical revival. But perhaps this is expecting too much, since the work of evangelism is never linked with the doctrine of the Church in any way—he can speak of the Church as an "abstraction"—nor with its worship; the hope seems to lie in more sermons where there is a "pouring out of the heart" and a "passionate love of souls". His analysis of the present situation from the point of view of the Church's work of evangelism is distressingly superficial and jejune, and the whole book is characterized by jargon and cliché unworthy of the subject.

E. J. Tinsley.

University College,
Hull.

The Methodist Heritage. By Henry Carter. Epworth Press. 15s.

This book prompts almost as many questions as it answers. On the one hand it assures us again how deeply the Wesley brothers were saturated in the Anglican tradition. It points out how they lived devotionally till the end of their days by the Christian calendar and the Prayer Book, observing the saints' days and using the collects (p. 199). They attended the parish churches wherever they went so long as they were not excluded. Even in the vexed matter of ordination, Wesley encouraged his early lay readers to seek ordination from the episcopate, and uttered the solemn warning to his multitude of adherents to "Beware of schism, of making a rent in the Church of Christ". When the Bishop of Londonderry ordained one of Wesley's early lay readers, on Wesley's own initiative, the Bishop exclaimed: "I ordain you to assist that good man, that he may not work himself to death" (p. 81). All this we knew, but is now greatly reinforced. Nor can anyone doubt the reality of the new spiritual vitality he brought to England, through his experience and teaching of Justification by Faith. The book contains a wealth of material, much of it derived from the primary source of the journals, letters, and works of John Wesley himself.

But two questions arise: (*a*) Has Methodism lost its *raison d'être*? and (*b*) Why does Anglicanism sometimes find it difficult to assimilate forces within itself?

In respect of the first question, Methodists themselves have asked the same question as proof of their own concern. Dr Henry Bett has written in *The Spirit of Methodism*: "We have allowed many of our characteristic institutions to perish. We have multiplied all sorts of organizations in imitation of those possessed by other Churches, but the Band meeting has gone; the Lovefeast has practically disappeared, though it was one of our most definite revivals of the usages of the primitive Church. . . . All the way through it is evident that for a generation or two past we have been nervous about anything that is distinctively Methodist."

In regard to the second question, the Church of England has not always shown any special genius for "harnessing" new movements of the Spirit. It is true that in the nineteenth century the revival of monasticism found Anglicanism sufficiently sympathetic to live and grow within it, and the evangelistic zeal of Wilson Carlile grew into the Church Army and continues as central and adjectival to the life of the Church. These were from within. But so was Methodism in its early days. If Rome can "harness" St Francis, St Ignatius, and others, so might the Church of England be expected to glory in her sons and relish their endeavours. Or did new wine have to flow into a new bottle?

G. I. F. Thomson.

Hilgay.

SHORTER NOTICES

Confucius and Christ. A Christian Estimate of Confucius. By L. Sherley-Price. Dacre Press. 21s.

It used frequently to be observed, and with truth, that the religion of the English gentleman was not Christianity but Confucianism. An interest wider than the specialist therefore attaches to this study of Confucianism, an interest which the author himself has in mind. His aim is to show that Confucianism can, like other forms of natural theology and moral philosophy, rightly be regarded as a *praeparatio evangelii*; and by the same taken, requires completion and correction in the Gospel. This double theme is painstakingly pursued through a study of the main doctrines of Confucius as they have been traditionally presented; and they are compared at each stage with the teaching of Jesus. The author remarks in his foreword that he is concerned "not to compare the tenets of Confucianism with Christianity, but to examine and relate to each other—so far as is possible—the original teachings of Sage and Saviour". In each case the interpretation is traditional: "we shall confine ourselves as far as possible to the teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels and St John, and expounded in the Epistles of the New Testament"; while on the Chinese side, the book may be described as generally

pre-critical, for the bibliography does not mention Mr Waley's "higher critical" translation of the *Analects* (which may be recommended to those who wish to pursue the question further) nor any of the recent American work, and there are no signs of acquaintance with the original Chinese text. On the other hand, for the purpose Mr Sherley-Price has in view, this does not much matter (for the same sort of reasons that render Proto-Luke and such irrelevant in the pulpit). And he is free from the faults which frequently bedevil those who write in this field: either they belittle Confucius in the supposed interests of the glory of the Lord; or they syncretize the two. Mr Sherley-Price is neither a crude propagandist nor a heretic. His theological view about the relation of Confucianism to the Christian revelation is traditional. It will not commend itself to Dr Hendrik Kraemer, or to Reformed theologians generally. It would however have been supported by the late Dom Lou Tseng-tsiang, whose *Ways of Confucius and Christ* is a parallel interpretation (and whose life and character was an illustration of the thesis); and would secure the sympathy of Dr T. C. Chao, who holds (I believe) that traditional Confucianism would have been a genuine preparation for Christianity if it had survived the attentions of its own modernizers; and of that Danish missionary friend who replied to my question: "And are you still a Barthian after five years in China?" "I am beginning to wonder if Dr Barth is true to the New Testament."

St Albans. David M. Paton.

Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion. By Reidar Thomte. Princeton University Press. $3.50.

The first paragraph of the final chapter of this book contains the following words: "It is not the purpose of the author to contribute a critique, but rather the more modest task of introducing the reader to the religious thought of Kierkegaard and to his numerous writings." This he has succeeded in doing lucidly and impartially.

In many books about Kierkegaard, especially "introductions", the author attempts to let him "speak for himself", a policy which, as a rule, can only leave the reader confused and bewildered: but here, in addition to extensive quotation, there is also commentary and explanation. As far as possible Mr Thomte tries to let Kierkegaard be his own commentator; thus, any objections which may arise in the mind of the reader are referred to Kierkegaard himself (e.g. pp. 116, 131): but where this is impossible, he expounds with a clear-sightedness and restraint which commend his reliability as a teacher.

He is not interested in saying whether Kierkegaard is right or wrong. Where our modern outlook differs, he is content to point it out and leave it at that (e.g. the discussion on sin, p. 166).

The task of sifting and categorizing the vast source material—evident on every page of this book—must have been a prodigious one, and Mr Thomte has done it admirably.

R. M. McGregor.

Glasgow.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(Mention here neither implies nor precludes subsequent comment.)

ABINGDON-COKESBURY: C. T. Craig, *The One Church in the Light of the New Testament* ($2.00).

ALLEN AND UNWIN: W. G. Babbington, *And It Came to pass: stories from the Bible* (7s. 6d. and 3s. 6d.).

LUDWIG BECHAUF VERLAG (BIELEFELD): Hans Ehrenberg, *Entwirrung der Konfirmation von der Schüsselstellung im Bau der Kirche* (n.p.).

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS: B. C. Butler, *The Originality of St Matthew* (18s.).

CAREY-KINGSGATE PRESS: R. L. Child, *The Lord's Supper: a Baptist Statement* (2s. 6d.).

CHURCH BOOK ROOM PRESS: H. D. S. Sweetapple, *The Making of a Nation* (2s.).

CHURCH HISTORICAL SOCIETY: J. C. S. Nias, *Gorham and the Bishop of Exeter* (17s. 6d.).

CHURCHMAN PUBLISHING CO.: James Duncan, *An English Parson in America* (7s. 6d.).

J. CLARKE AND CO.: John Oman, *A Dialogue with God, and other sermons and addresses* (7s. 6d.).

EDINBURGH HOUSE PRESS: F. G. Healey, *Malaya: What of the Church?* (9d.); "An Observer", *China: an Object Lesson* (9d.).

ETTRICK PRESS: R. J. Drummond, *Lest We Forget: Reminiscences of a Nonagenarian* (10s. 6d.).

FABER: Michael Roberts, *The Estate of Man* (15s.).

FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION: E. L. Allen, *The Purpose of Jesus* (5s.).

GOLLANCZ: Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator* (16s.).

GROSVENOR PRESS (PORTSMOUTH): T. Grigg-Smith, *Prayers for School, Church and Home* (Revised edition) (3s. 6d.).

HARPER (NEW YORK): R. D. Poteat, *God Makes the Difference* ($3.00).

HODDER AND STOUGHTON: Bryan Green, *The Practice of Evangelism* (10s. 6d.); G. D. Henderson, *Church and Ministry* (10s. 6d.); E. D. Jarvis, *If Any Man Minister* (7s. 6d.); A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The Church of South India* (7s. 6d.).

MOWBRAY: Henry de Candole, *The Church's Offering* (Revised edition) (2s. 6d.).

NORTH-HOLLAND PUBLISHING CO.: *Proceedings of the Seventh Congress for the History of Religions* (f. 10).

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS: John Baillie, *Natural Science and the Spiritual Life* (5s.).

PICKERING AND INGLIS: John Macbeath, *In Time of Trouble* (6s. 6d.).

ROUTLEDGE AND KEGAN PAUL: Martin Buber, *Two Types of Faith* (12s. 6d.).

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS BOOKSTALL: Robert Birley, *The End of Learning* (William Ainslie Memorial Lecture) (1s. 3d.).

S.C.M. PRESS: A. M. Hunter, *Interpreting the New Testament 1900-1950* (10s. 6d.); Ian Thomson, *An Experiment in Worship* (2s. 6d.); Emil Brunner, *The Scandal of Christianity* (8s. 6d.).

SHEED AND WARD: R. W. Hyman, *The True Likeness* (16s.).

S.P.C.K.: C. M. Chavasse, *The Meaning of the Psalms* (2s. 6d.); L. H. C. Hopkins, *The Layman's Guide to Pastoral Theology* (2s. 6d.); C. E. Lambert, *Life in the Spirit* (4s. 6d.); J. E. L. Oulton, *Holy Communion and Holy Spirit* (15s.); D. Watmough, *A Church Renascent* (8s. 6d.).

S.P.C.K.-IN-INDIA: T. E. Keay, *A History of the Syrian Church in India* (Second edition) (Rs 1/8).

TAYLOR'S FOREIGN PRESS: Abraham Levene, *The Early Syrian Fathers on Genesis* (n.p.).

UNITED SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN LITERATURE: Jessie Powell, *The Sandals of Rama* (a missionary play) (2s. 6d.).

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